



KITTITAS VALLEY FIRE & RESCUE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Board Files Resolution for Fire Levy Lid Lift *Measure Planned for November Ballot*

Ellensburg, Wash. – The Board of Fire Commissioners for Kittitas Valley Fire and Rescue filed a resolution to place a 10-cent Fire Levy lid lift on the November General Election ballot. The fire district includes the cities of Ellensburg and Kittitas, Central Washington University campus and rural areas of the lower Kittitas Valley.

Daily operations at Kittitas Valley Fire and Rescue are funded primarily through a Fire Levy paid through property taxes. This levy rate falls over time as assessed property values rise, limiting the fire district to the same amount of revenue per year (plus a one percent increase) allowed by law.

For example, voters originally approved a Fire Levy rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in 2007. Since that time, the Fire Levy has fallen to \$1.40/\$1,000. In the same time period, call volumes have increased almost 50 percent. The fire district also is experiencing more back-to-back emergency calls, which adds to this demand.

Fire Chief John Sinclair says that revenue is not keeping up with the demand for emergency services. More importantly, the fire district has a plan to get ahead of the issue before it becomes a problem.

“We don’t want to see emergency response time’s increase or calls go unanswered,” said Chief Sinclair. “Our goal is to just maintain service levels which means hiring firefighter/EMT’s and firefighter/paramedics to meet this increased demand for service.”

The 10-cent lid lift would cost the owner of a \$250,000 home approximately \$2.08 per month (or \$25 per year). In addition to emergency personnel, funding would be used to pay increasing costs for items like training, emergency equipment and medical supplies, utilities, and apparatus maintenance.

The fire district will hold a series of public meetings this fall prior to the election. In the meantime, Chief John Sinclair is available to answer questions about the Fire Levy lid lift at (509) 856-7714 or sinclairj@kvfr.org

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Kittitas Valley Fire & Rescue provides rescue, fire prevention, structural and wildland fire protection to 30,000 people over 280 square miles. Its paramedic-level ambulance program provides life-saving medical care and

transport to 34,000 people over 1,200 square miles. Thirty-five full-time firefighters (including 16 paramedics), 80 volunteer and part-time firefighters/emergency medical technicians appreciate the opportunity to serve our community. The fire district operates under a balanced budget and has passed all financial and accountability audits by the state.